

Changes in requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic

Date: April 20, 2020

To: Child Development Services grantees

From: Deb Swenson-Klatt, Child Development Services Manager

RE: Temporary changes to policies, requirements for grantees that provide training, professional development, and financial supports to child care providers

Background

On March 13, 2020, Governor Tim Walz declared a peacetime emergency to protect Minnesotans from the infectious disease known as COVID-19. As part of the state government response to the emergency, state agencies were asked to prioritize services and change program requirements to respond to the changing needs of Minnesotans during this crisis. This memo reflects changes made to grants overseen by the Child Development Services Unit that include child care training, professional development and financial support services for child care providers.

Duration of policy changes

These changes will be in effect from April 10, 2020, until the peacetime emergency ends.

Impacted grantees

- Local agencies included in the Child Care Aware system and the statewide Child Care Aware of Minnesota Coordinating Office
- Minnesota Tribal Resources for Early Childhood Care, a program of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
- Organizations that carry out services related to the Minnesota professional development system, including contracts that support inclusive child care, health and safety, supporting care for infants and toddlers, business supports, school-age care, and support for care and education providers to track their training and professional development, including:
 - Center for Inclusive Child Care
 - First Children's Finance
 - Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children – Minnesota School-Age Care Alliance
 - Achieve – The MN Center for Professional Development
 - University of Minnesota, Center for Early Education and Development

Changes approved

Child Development Services is approved to provide the following guidance, flexibility and temporary policy changes to improve the ability of grantees to serve child care providers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Coaching of child care providers that was previously required to be in person may now be offered online, by phone, and/or by email, and expanded to meet increased demand.
- Training for child care providers that was previously required to be in person may now be offered online, and may be expanded to meet increased demand.
- In-person events, convenings or community engagement may instead be provided online if possible, or postponed with funds for the activity carried over to the next fiscal year.
- Staff development funded with grant contract funding may be done online or postponed.
- Travel required in grant contracts may be waived or postponed. If postponed, funds may be carried over to the next fiscal year.
- Deliverables that require in-person interactions, such as observations or recording podcasts and videos, may be postponed and funds may be carried forward to complete these activities next fiscal year, or if these options are not feasible, grantees may be released from these grant requirements.
- Requirements to submit hard copy documents are waived or postponed, and electronic transfer is permitted.
- Targets for performance measures, such as numbers of providers served, may be waived, though data collection and reporting on these performance measures must be continued.
- Online access to applications for Child Care Aware regional grants may be considered.
- Child Care Aware regional grant review committee meetings must be conducted online.
- Staff capacity may be redirected to best serve changing provider needs.
- Any unspent funds from Child Care Aware regional grants may be used for supports to reduce the spread of COVID-19, or for emergency grants for child care providers.

Impacts for grantees

Child Development Services will allow flexibility in each contract to implement the temporary policy changes for programs listed above, redirecting staff capacity and modifying timelines, services, and deliverables to best serve the changing needs of child care providers during the peacetime emergency. As needed, Child Development Services will allow Fiscal Year 2020 funds in a contract to carry over into the next fiscal year to implement these changes.

Changes to contract requirements and deliverables will vary by contract and be informed by federal and state guidance for contracting during the COVID-19 pandemic. Impacted grantees will be contacted by their Child Development Services project managers with details about how these approved changes will apply to their contracts. Contract amendments may be needed in some cases.